

# FARUQ AHMED CHOUDHURY

## A consummate diplomat

SHAMSER M. CHOWDHURY BB

**A**MBASSADOR Faruq Ahmed Choudhury, more popularly known as Faruq bhai to scores of his friends and admirers, passed away on May 17, this year. A man larger than life and a fighter to the last, he defied the odds as long as his robust mind would let him. But, as is inevitable, death had the final say. A product of University of Dhaka the 1950s, Faruq Ahmed Choudhury joined the Pakistan Foreign Service back in 1956 and was one of the two Bengalis to do so that year. That was the time when one could join the elite group only through the strength of one's merit.

During his almost four decades of service as a professional diplomat with wide experience to his credit, Faruq Choudhury was one of those few who had earned the admiration and respect of his seniors and juniors alike. While his seniors knew that Faruq could be counted on to deliver when tasked to do so, his juniors found comfort in the knowledge that when needed, Ambassador Faruq Choudhury was always there to protect, counsel and guide. In the pre-Independence days, he had served in Rome, Beijing, The Hague and Algiers.

A patriot to the core, Ambassador Faruq Ahmed Choudhury had been deeply involved in promoting and projecting the foreign policy goals of Bangladesh from the very moment of the country's birth. His consummate



Ubiquitous charm and ready wit -- stongest traits.

skill was manifest wherever he went, be it in London as the Deputy High Commissioner, or as Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, and

Brussels and the EU, or as the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, and lastly as High Commissioner to India. It remains an enduring testimony to his

skill that as the Chief Coordinator while hosting the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in 1983 and subsequently the 7th SAARC

Summit in 1994, both in Dhaka, he undertook the responsibilities as a challenge and delivered a product that one could be rightly proud of. He did so with the calm and composure that was so typical of him. While engaging an adversary, Faruq Choudhury demonstrated the highest levels of professionalism and tact, his strongest tools being his ubiquitous charm and ready wit. Faruq Ahmed Choudhury embodied the finest traits of a diplomat.

Following his retirement from government service in 1992, Faruq Choudhury invoked his enviable skills as a writer and as a columnist. His twelve books and periodic columns, all in Bengali, drew high reviews, both because of what he wrote and how he wrote them. His eloquence was pervasive. An intrepid traveller, he never tired of discovering a new place.

Faruq Ahmed Choudhury was a complete family man. A loving husband to his partner for life, the graceful Zeena Choudhury, a caring father to their two wonderful children Adnan and Farzana, he was always there when his family, even the extended family, needed his support.

Ambassador Faruq Ahmed Choudhury, the good man, loved life and he lived it to the full. As he now steps into the other half of eternity, we pray that his soul rests in peace and may the Almighty grant him place among His chosen ones.

The writer is a former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh.

*While engaging an adversary, Faruq Choudhury demonstrated the highest levels of professionalism and tact, his strongest tools being his ubiquitous charm and ready wit.*

## CHINA'S 'ONE BELT, ONE ROAD' INITIATIVE

# How Bangladesh can be benefitted

MD. SHARIFUL ISLAM

**I**N September and October 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the proposal of jointly building a Silk Road Economic Belt and a 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, popularly known as the One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiative. OBOR links countries and regions that account for about 60 percent of the world's population and 30 percent of global GDP. From its inception, OBOR has gained sincere attention from policymakers, the academic community and other concerned stakeholders across the world. China's OBOR initiative basically seeks to economically, socially and culturally connect Asia, Europe and Africa by creating road and sea routes. In fact, Vuk Jeremic, President of the Center for International Relations and Sustainable Development, identified the initiative as "the greatest human endeavor ever to connect countries and cultures".

From May 14-15, 2017, President Xi Jinping hosted a global summit on his 'Belt and Road' initiative in Beijing, which was closely watched by the world. At the opening ceremony, Xi Jinping described the One Belt, One Road initiative as "a project of the century" that will benefit people across the world. A total of 29 foreign heads of state and government leaders attended the forum, including Russian President Vladimir Putin. Other delegates included officials, entrepreneurs, financiers and journalists from over 130 countries, and representatives of key international organisations, such as the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, World Bank's President Jim Yong Kim, and Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde. This certainly demonstrates the growing attention and acceptance of Chinese OBOR initiative globally.

A high-level delegation from Bangladesh also participated in the forum to discuss various issues like the prospects of the BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar) economic corridor, a key OBOR project connecting to the resourceful Indian Ocean, according to media reports. The Bangladeshi delegation also placed some other key issues at the forum, such as reducing the trade gap between the two countries and allowing duty-free access of 22 major Bangladeshi products to

Chinese markets, something that Bangladesh has been requesting for several years. Bangladesh also has an opportunity to improve connectivity and transform its economic conditions by exploring new avenues through trade, investment and greater people-to-people exchanges among the OBOR countries. In addition, China is expected to

between Bangladesh and China is expected to grow. And China matters a lot to Bangladesh, considering the growing volume of trade along with other dimensions. Besides, cargo transport time is expected to be reduced across OBOR-aligned countries, which will positively impact on Bangladesh's trade with China.

three years to developing countries and international organisations participating in the Belt and Road initiative. Moreover, it has pledged to provide emergency food aid worth 2 billion yuan to developing countries along the Belt and Road, and make an additional contribution of USD 1 billion to the Assistance Fund for South-South Cooperation, 100 "happy home" projects, 100 poverty alleviation projects and 100 health care and rehabilitation projects in countries along the Belt and Road. It has also promised to set up 50 joint laboratories with countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance cooperation on innovation.

Bangladesh has already received positive outcomes from its warm ties with China in recent times. For instance, in addition to Chinese domestic banks, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will be an important financial source for Bangladesh's economic development needs, as witnessed by the fact that one of the first four AIIB loans was for a Bangladeshi power distribution system upgrade and expansion project (Lewis, 2016).

With regard to the question of where does Bangladesh stand in the OBOR initiative, as Donald J. Lewis, Director of the Centre for International Economic Law, Trade & Development wrote in *China Daily* (October 16, 2016): "[t]he land dimensions of the OBOR consist of several interconnected corridors spanning the entire Eurasian continent. Bangladesh is centrally situated along the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor. Bangladesh also occupies a strategic position along the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road with its bustling port of Chittagong as a major maritime hub through the Indian Ocean".

Finally, it is worth a note that the 21st Century will most likely be the Chinese century, as China will be leading the world in various ways. The OBOR could introduce a new era of win-win globalisation. Bangladesh needs to utilise her geographic location and harness the benefits from the OBOR initiative. Thus full cooperation with China to make this initiative successful will be a wise decision for Bangladesh, as this century is all about shared prosperity and development.

The writer is Assistant Professor of International Relations, University of Rajshahi. Email: shariful\_rui@ru.ac.bd



invest a cumulative USD 4 trillion in OBOR countries within an unspecified time horizon (*The Economist*, July 2, 2016).

Bangladesh formally joined the Chinese OBOR initiative during President Xi Jinping's visit to the country in October 2016. Within the larger framework of OBOR, economic integration

Thus, Bangladesh, as one of the participating countries will obviously benefit from this initiative. In addition, Xi Jinping in the summit announced that China will contribute an additional 100 billion yuan (about USD 14.5 billion) to the Silk Road Fund. China will provide assistance worth 60 billion yuan in the coming

*Bangladesh, as one of the participating countries will obviously benefit from this initiative. China will provide assistance worth 60 billion yuan in the coming three years to developing countries and international organisations participating in the Belt and Road initiative.*

**QUOTABLE Quote**

**PAUL KRUGMAN**  
American economist, and Distinguished Professor of Economics at the City University of New York.

*If you want to understand opposition to climate action, follow the money.*

**CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH**

<b>ACROSS</b>	28 Oozes	6 Impair
1 Went fast	31 Historic times	7 News star
5 Nebraska city	32 Hodgepodge	8 Balloon fill
10 Dorian Gray's creator	34 Word, in Paris	9 Skilled ones
12 Like horses	35 Ventilate	11 Straying
13 Group of confidants	36 Stop -- Dime	14 Port vessel
15 Chem. or biol.	37 Saturn, for one	19 Strong winds
16 Scoundrel	40 Land in the sea	20 Diamond corners
17 Femur's upper end	41 Pizza portion	24 Jewelry buy
18 Plane's place	42 Staggers	25 Autobiography
20 Ring event	43 Mil. sch.	26 Incite
21 Juvenile		27 Be a fink
22 Prepares for war	<b>DOWN</b>	29 Of speech sounds
23 Train stations	1 Sweeping sound	30 New York tribe
25 TV's Lauer	2 Jockey Laffit -- Jr.	33 Quite full
	3 Pacific current	35 College study
	4 JFK's predecessor	38 Slippery fish
	5 Leave out	39 In the style of

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER**

S	H	A	O	V	E	S	T	S		
T	O	F	U	E	A	L	I	E	N	S
O	W	I	E	C	O	R	S	E	T	
W	I	R	E	T	A	P	T	E	E	
S	E	E	N	O	T	E	O	R	E	
B	O	Y	E	Q	U	A	D			
G	E	N	E	S	P	U	T	T	S	
E	P	E	E	R	O	E				
N	A	W	R	E	L	E	A	S	E	
D	U	G	O	P	E	N	S	E	A	
R	E	L	A	P	S	E	B	I	D	S
T	E	R	N	S	D	E	E	D		

**BEETLE BAILEY** by Mort Walker

BEETLE KNOWS I'LL NEVER DISOBEY AN ORDER!

KEEP OFF THE GRASS

**BABY BLUES** by Kirkman & Scott

DO WE NEED MILK WARNERS?

ALREADY GOT 'EM.

WE DO? I DON'T REMEMBER SEEING--

PRODDED BRA AND A WOOL SWEATER.

OH...YEAH.

SAFE, RELIABLE AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT!